Ronald "Rambo" Kim   Ognian "steel" Gueorguieu

The Art Of Counter Strike

Vol.1

Written by:

Duncan "Thorin" Shields

Preface

The Art Of Counter-Strike (TAO-CS) took the better part of a year to design, months of research on the part of the authors and hundreds of man hours in the writing, recording and rendering processes undertaken to bring you the finished product. Its pricing was carefully considered and after deciding a very fair price in relation to what the buyer gets the authors went out of their way to add every kind of bonus and extra they could to make the product the best value for money it could be. We set out with a goal to provide the best learning resource we could create; we worked at that goal until we had covered every topic and nailed down every concept. We then polished what we had and refined it over and over in the name of thoroughness and because we believed in not just creating a good product but one which would stand the test of time and be a tome of collective knowledge players could return to over and over to learn new things from each time. By reading this paragraph you should understand what TAO-CS means to us and how much we value it and think highly of it.

A similar situation should occur for the reader. After spending your hard earned cash to buy this learning resource and using your valuable time to learn its secrets and let the more advanced topics simmer until you've gotten to the very essence of them it's only fair that you too should understand the value of TAO-CS for yourself and for us. This goal has been completed and we did everything we could to get there, that makes TAO-CS not only something of value for us but for you the consumer also. By attempt-

ing to crack the protection or otherwise distribute any elements of TAO-CS you are both devaluing the product of our toil and your own copy. If you want to see more products and of the same quality and attention to detail from the TAO-CS creative collective then it is vital you respect the value of the product we've created here and which you've bought into by getting your own personal copy. There are few people with high speed computers and internet access who cannot afford $29.95 for something which gives them more education and experiential data than a hundred lessons priced at a similar price per unit. If you the reader can respect what we've done we'll continue to respect you as a consumer and provide the best and most innovative product solutions we can. We'll also maintain our pledge to keep these products at the same high value by securing them and not allowing others to distribute elements of them. Respect our efforts, respect TAO-CS and respect yourself.

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TAO CS

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Achievement

Experience

Experiences

Glossary

What is The Art Of Counter–Strike and who is it for?

To fully understand any subject requires much time taking in all the available information on each aspect of it and then a reflection period where these separate parts are pieced together in one's mind and conclusions are drawn or may arise naturally over time. As a product TAO-CS is a guide to playing competitive Counter-Strike, improving the player's overall game and if followed correctly lead him further down the path towards real success. The more personal motivations behind the different personalities getting involved with the project is revealed in the 'About the authors' area of this introductory section but as a general collective the aim was to create the most complete guide to competitive Counter-Strike possible at this time. This meant not only having suitable candidates providing the information from which the guide would be created but also having the right people to take that information and make it understandable to the reader and display it in a fashion which both aids their intake and helps them see how each piece of information connects to others to form a coherent philosophy and set of guidelines for playing.

A stigma associated with guides for most subjects is that they are intended only for the uninformed or beginner level of participant, this is not the case with

TAO-CS. One of the key goals from the outset of the creation process was that TAO-CS would be aimed at all levels of Counter-Strike player, from the least to the most competitive. This meant not only providing a sound fundamental basis on all the topics for the beginners but then adding to that information to help intermediate players improve their game and understand more clearly principles and concepts which had previously eluded full understanding. From there a third point of view was considered and incorporated into the process, that of catering to even the highest calibre of competitive player. Since the authors of TAO-CS have soared to the highest heights of competitive success Counter-Strike has to offer they were able to impart more advanced concepts and information for those players who are on the fringe of being at the championship level or even at the championship but without the kind of perfectly rounded game all players should aspire to possess. This aspect of TAO-CS may seem lofty but a simple look at the names involved with its production will show that experts in all the different areas of both Counter-Strike and the fields relevant to the production of the best guide possible were brought together to ensure the end product was the pinnacle of its kind.

Who made The Art Of Counter-Strike and how are they qualified?

Validation and reputation are established and cultivated in a number of ways, whether that be through accomplishments or the respect of one's peers. The creative collective behind the existence TAO-CS is:

- Ron "Rambo" Kim
- Ognian "steel" Gueorguiev
- Duncan "Thorin" Shields

Rambo and steel have both established themselves as some of the best players to ever compete in Counter-Strike through both their accomplishments and the degree of respect they have garnered over the years from their peers and the multitude of fans they have reached through their play. Thorin has likewise es-

tablished himself as one of the world's elite in his field. As one of Counter-Strike's premiere journalists and writers his work with a number of communities and sites has informed and entertained fans the world over.

Rambo has been placing in the top 3 of the biggest competitive Counter-Strike tournaments in the world for over 7 years. His sustained level of achievement combined with the thousands of minutes of lessons he has given on the subject over the years are a testament to the degree to which he has made understanding every aspect of Counter-Strike a lifetime's obsession. Coming into this project he knew meant having to give up all his secrets, all those little moves the players at the top of their game build up an arsenal of to fool and mystify their opposition. All of this was gladly sacrificed to the overarching aim of creating the bible of competitive Counter-Strike. His obsession with being the best player he can be spilled over into creating the best Counter-Strike guide he could create.

As the first Counter-Strike player to win both a WCG gold medal and a CPL championship title steel immediately set himself apart from others in the history books as well as in the Counter-Strike servers. As a Canadian his place on the first fully sponsored American Counter-Strike team bears witness to the levels his talent and dedication have risen to on his journey to hone his game to the utmost degree. steel's path to the top is as unique as his own refined style of play and allows him to approach and interact with the process behind the creation of TAO-CS from a different point of view.

To take a single player's opinions and lessons from his career and create a guide for all players would leave gaps where topics were lacking just as no one player's game is perfect to the extent that he has no weaknesses or areas for improvement. Combining the collective understanding and experience of both steel and Rambo allowed all bases to be covered and all topics to be discussed and dissected on the way to creating the most complete manual of competitive CS player imaginable. Taking into account these different approaches to the same goal incorporated in the design process players are not only given multiple ways of looking at any given topic to find one which they understand but also a variety of styles of approach to each from which they can mould and refine their own game to be the best it can be. The aim was not simply to teach players how to play like Rambo or steel but to show what they could take from the games of both to improve their own individual style of play to being the best it can be in their own context.

With steel and Rambo covering all aspects of Counter-Strike theory, technique and experience the creative team is completed with the anchoring of the project around Thorin. After years of working as a professional journalist and writer within the blossoming field of esports Thorin has attended numerous major events in a variety of locations around the world, on his way observing professional players in their element and learning what makes them tick. His hundreds of written, audio and video interviews have been a process of constantly refining and improving the ability to extract the most interesting and accurate information from the best Counter-Strike players in the world and transmit it to the reader in a form understandable to him as a person and player. This is where the creative process of TAO-CS takes bloom and realises its potential. Even the most earnest effort from a professional Counter-Strike player to develop and produce the most complete guide would not be without road blocks and difficulties, even on the most superficial level it is obvious that players whose natural tendencies are towards success and improvement will have difficulty in relaying information to those who do not possess those same traits. By having them filtered through and translated by someone who is an expert in the field of writing allows the

reader to engage with some of the finest Counter-Strike minds of our era while doing so in a space where the information he receives is easily understood and the principles and concepts expounded upon are relatable his own game and mindset.

Just as the creative ability which informed the play of Rambo and steel allowed them to win multiple Counter-Strike championships and enabled them to be in a position to explain the various aspects of competitive play for a project such as this so Thorin's creative aptitude for combining and displaying such information makes him the perfect third entity for this streamlined and efficient collective. Rambo and steel's willingness to provide any and all information on the variety of aspects to playing successful Counter-Strike combined with Thorin's ability to extract that information efficiently, accurately and then relay it to all levels of reader are what sets TAO-CS apart from any guides which have come before it. When three experts in their fields come together with a collective goal of producing the best possible product it is the reader who reaps the benefits of that toil.

How was TAO-CS made?

At all times directed by their goal of creating the most complete guide they could the authors sought to use every approach to its creation to assure the quality of the end result. First months were spent discussing and breaking down the exact topics which would be featured in TAO-CS. From here those topics were further refined and broken down into their smallest units of

significance so no area was left uncovered or undiscussed. With the authors being located in different national regions (Rambo in the USA, steel in Canada and Thorin in the UK) these initial stages of the project took place online, textually and via sessions using voice communication software. Once all topics had been defined and requirements had been set for the information to be gathered and compiled the following months were spent with steel and Rambo discussing each of the topics, the information generated being stored by Thorin and additional information being extracted where necessary to ensure completeness at all times.

When everything that could be completed online had been completed the creative team met in person for a period of time to ensure all topics were covered as well as possible and that different creative solutions to displaying the information were devised. TAO-CS would not be a victim of distance in being limited by the boundaries of text, instead areas were identified where the player would more fully understand through the mediums of pictoral representation or audio and video solutions. High quality audio recordings were made and stored so they could be edited into video explanations and demonstrations of a number of key concepts intrinsic to both the improvement of the player and his being able to crack the subtleties of what professional players are doing in specific situations that is making them successful.

After exhausting all online and face-to-face solutions to the problems of creating the most complete Counter-Strike guide imaginable the remaining task was the physical creation of the guide itself. Thorin wrote up each of the sections from the voluminous amounts of information gathered from the two Counter-Strike champions. Once translated into sections all types of player could understand the guide underwent a process of editing which involved steel and Rambo reading each section and responding with revisions which were then integrated into the guide until there were no revisions left to be proffered and the aim of making the guidelines and principles as clear from their pure source to the player reading it had been achieved. The multimedia content added an additional layer of interest and explanation for the reader as now instead of merely reading he could also get direct audio and visual feedback in watching real examples of the players demonstrating or explaining certain techniques either in isolation or from real matches which took place in their championship-winning careers.

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What does The Art Of Counter-Strike (TAO-CS) the name, refer to or mean?

Since it was written in the 6th century BC Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War' has been praised as one of the most brilliantly constructed military treatises on tactics and strategies ever to be created. Taking from this epic historical artefact the philosophy of getting to the core of every problem and finding pure and tangible answers alike we set about applying the same kind of goals to the matter of competitive Counter-Strike. Counter-Strike is an art form in as much as it is impossible to write rigid rules for every single situation or action which must or can occur within a single round or match. The game flows from the competitors' experiences and they express their imagination in the decisions they make every step of the way. Were things any other way every competitor would by now have figured out all the secrets and tricks to becoming a great player.

With this challenge in front of us we set about approaching Counter-Strike from a scientific perspective, looking at what can be observed and replicated. From these observations and calculations we built up guidelines and different strategies which could be employed by all levels of competitive player. We then made the guide as complete as we could by adding onto that solid foundation the kind of abstract but experientially definable aspects which the truly great competitor must harness to find success within the game. Approaching the task of relating and translating these to the reader in a number of innovative ways we have created an end product which both teaches the player in the sense of showing him what to do as well as allowing him to teach himself by providing all the tools and resources he needs from which to grasp any concept or situation that may come his way.

As homage to the source of our inspiration we named this project The Art Of Counter-Strike. We also understood that the acronym created by that name, TAO-CS, when said as a word became "Tao cs". The Chinese character 'Tao' means 'the way and order of the Universe'. So when we combined the two together it gave us a meaning which was essentially: the way of Counter-Strike. This is a fitting name for the project we set about to create, being in line with our philosophy.
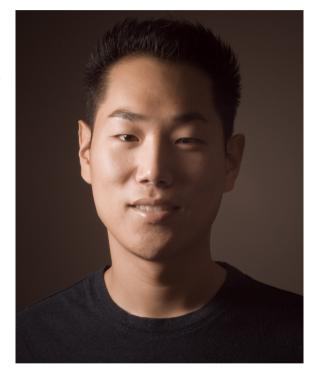
Ron "Rambo" Kim

Age: 23

Rambo's Counter-Strike career began with him LAN-ning with friends in the Texas area. He began attending local LAN tournaments and soon as a member of rs (Riot Squad) with his friends he begun to rise up the competitive ladder. When rs merged with their chief rivals TRU to form syn for the Babbages event Rambo would have his first taste of playing with one of his future team-mates, Porter. A 5th place at the Babbages CPL may have seemed a humble beginning for someone who would go on to be one of North America's greatest players but from syn he went on to join CK3 (Clan Killers 3) where other future X3 team-mates were playing.

From the ashes of CK3 rose X3 (Xtreme 3) a team whose starting five dominated the North American clan scene losing almost never and beating even their closest rivals by large margins. With X3 Rambo won his first major Counter-Strike tournament, the first official one run by the CPL, the Speakeasy CPL event. As well as taking home his share of the $10,000 first prize money Rambo was perched firmly atop the competitive ladder in North America both online and in LAN competition. A fact only further impressed upon the community by X3's domination of an invite tournament held by the CPL at their headquarters. The top four American teams were invited and the winners would receive pro-

totype Intel processors capable of speeds far beyond those available on the commercial retail market. Needless to say at the close of the tournament X3 were still top dogs and Rambo had a new high speed gaming rig in his possession.

The next major tournament for Rambo would prove to be the biggest of his life until that point, the CPL had organized a CPL world championship event with a prize purse so staggering the winners would receive $50,000 and the second place finishers $25,000. This quickly attracted a collection of the best teams in the world, including both Rambo's X3 and the mighty Swedish giants NiP who had dominated the European CPL events that year. After battling each side of the tournament brackets as #1 and #2 seeds NiP and X3 met as perhaps they were always destined to in the finals. Out of the three maps played between the two teams in the tournament X3 were able to win one but lost the other two and so left in 2nd place with $25,000. Not only had they produced an epic final still remembered the world over today but in beating NiP on a map X3 had shown as team they were one of the very best in the world and that their individual players could play with a team considered still to be one of the greatest of all time.

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The fallout of the biggest Counter-Strike tournament to that point was that when the event had ended motivation within X3 waned over the coming months and the team was disbanded. Before the next CPL could arrive Rambo along with some of his X3 team-mates created 3D (Desire Discipline Dedication) After teething troubles at their first CPL event the team revamped the roster to bring in some new blood in the form of top competitors of the time, including steel. Attending the WCG saw the team working out the kinks in their team play without making a significant impact but had Rambo winning a bronze medal in the continent versus continent section of the event. The new 3D stormed to victory at the very next CPL event in the Winter of 2002, with Rambo being named MVP of the event. Winning $30,000 and establishing themselves as world #1s the team soon found full sponsorship from a host of big name tech companies. Not only would they receive travel expenses but would become the first American Counter-Strike team to be paid full salaries to play Counter-Strike.

The next CPL event in the summer of 2003 saw Rambo and 3D maintain their status as one of the world's elite by placing 3rd, losing narrowly to the event champions and in overtime to the 2nd place finishers. This was still enough to garner them $28,000 in prize winnings. At the next WCG event Rambo secured his second WCG medal, this time silver, by placing 2nd. This also added another $20,000 to Rambo's team career winnings. The year 2004 saw 3D find difficulties in replicating their past CPL successes but improve their WCG record by winning the next WCG, taking $50,000 in prize

money for the accomplishment and the prestigious gold medals which accompany such a win. At the following WCG the feat was repeated and Rambo and his team won another $50,000 and their second set of gold medals. This also led to them being inducted into the WCG hall of fame, an honour only bestowed upon champions.

2006 saw Rambo add an additional $65,800 to his team career winnings in the space of 5 events. His team won the EverLAN CS:S tournament and WSVG's LANwar event, placed 4th at the ESWC event in France, came in 2nd at the WSVG finals in New York and the WCG's Pan-Am games. The latter event also had Rambo pick up a WCG silver medal taking his total medal tally to 5.

The end of 2006 saw his tenure in 3D come to a close and Rambo made his decision to join up with the prestigious compLexity organization to play Counter-Strike Source. Before their Source adventure would begin there was just enough time to crush the remaining 1.6 competitors in the US at the PNY finals in early 2007. Being drafted by the Los Angeles franchise of CGS as a member of coL Rambo had once again secured himself the highest salary for a Counter-Strike player in the world and his CS:S team would go on to achieve the best record in the opening season. In the downtime after the end of the first season the team and Rambo won the two big Source LAN events held, namely Digital Life and Newegg LANfest. In december of 2007 at the CGS world finals coL and Rambo won the individual CS Source title to become crowned CGS CS:S world champions. They had set themselves as firm #1s in Source.

LAN Accomplishments:

2000 5th Babbages CPL $700 (syn)
2001 1st Speakeasy CPL $10,000 (X3)
2001 1st CPL Invite (X3) - Prototype Intel processors
2001 1st CPL 4-year anniversary event $1,200 (X3)
2001 2nd CPL Winter $25,000 (X3)
2002 7th WCG (3D)

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2002 3rd WCG Continent vs. Continent (America) – Bronze medal
2002 1st CPL Winter $30,000 (3D)
2003 2nd KillerLAN $1,500 (3D)
2003 3rd CPL Summer $28,000 (3D)
2003 2nd WCG $20,000 (3D) – Silver medal
2003 13th CPL Winter $1,000 (3D)
2004 13th CPL Summer $1,000 (3D)
2004 1st WCG $50,000 (3D) – Gold medal
2004 8th CPL Winter $2,000 (3D)
2005 1st WCG USA qualifier $5,000 (3D)
2005 1st WCG $50,000 (3D) – Gold medal
2005 2nd Acon5 qualifier (3D)
2005 1st GGL Americup $4000 (3D)
2005 1st Digital Life $10,000(3D)
2005 9th CPL Winter $900 (3D)
2006 3rd Transatlantic showdown $5,250(3D)
2006 1st EverLAN CS:S $10,000 (3D)
2006 1st WSVG LANwar $12,500 (3D)
2006 4th ESWC $16,000 (3D)
2006 2nd CGI $15,000 (3D)
2006 9th WSVG ISC $2,250 (3D)
2006 2nd Digitallife $10,000 (3D)
2006 2nd WSVG Finals, NY $25,000 (3D)
2006 1st WCG USA qualifier $17,500 (3D)
2006 5th WCG (3D)
2006 2nd WCG Pan-Am $2,300 (3D) – Silver medal
2007 1st PNY Finals $2,000 (coL)
2007 1st Digital Life $10,000 (coL)
2007 1st Newegg LANfest $5,000 (coL)
2007 1st CGS world finals $5,000 (coL)

Total team career prize winnings: over **$385,000**

Q&A

How did you get involved with TAO-CS and what made you want to be a part of its creation?

Rambo:

"I was first told about TAO-CS about a year ago by steel. He told me him and Thorin had been working on a comprehensive counter-strike guide. Doing over 13,000 minutes of lessons and seeing quality work from previous projects they had worked on, I knew I wanted to be involved."

What were you aiming to achieve in creating TAO-CS and how successful do you think you were to those ends?

Rambo:

"Our main goal in creating TAO-CS was creating a guide that really teaches users in detail how they can improve as an individual. We tried our best to explain those topics in detail with screenshots, videos, and well though out content. I believe we have the most extensive guide ever made."

Who would you recommend TAO-CS for and what will they get out of it?

Rambo:

"This guide is made for anyone who wants to improve their game instantly. You will get a quality guide that is guaranteed to teach you."

Ognian "steel" Gueorguiev

Age: 22

Beginning with online play steel's Counter-Strike career quickly moved into the LAN environment as he attended local LANs in Quebec and made connections. Soon his talent had been noticed by then top Canadian team xeno who had placed 2nd at the Speakeasy CPL event. Playing with his country's top team steel's improving game began to turn heads both in the North American community as a whole and within his team. When it came time to leave the team he and fellow xeno member reek joined up with the French Canadian team LnD (Legends never Die) who attended the Canadian WCG qualifier and promptly won. Their prize had them flying out to Korea to represent Canada in Counter-Strike in the gaming equivalent of the Olympics. Battling through the tournament in Korea the team were sent to the losers' bracket by the German representatives mTw only to produce a remarkable comeback winning two maps in a row to become champions of the first WCG. As well as $40,000 in team winnings, making steel the first North American CS player to ever win over $25,000, steel received the gold medal of a champion. Along with his team he was also inducted into the WCG hall of fame, an honour shared by few to this day.

With the WCG behind them and some of the members lacking motivation to go on with Counter-Strike steel found himself needing a new team to compete at the top. By the time the next major event, CPL Summer 2002, came around he had found a starting spot on GX (Gamers-X) who had agreed to pay his travel expenses from Canada to the CPL event in Dallas. At the event GX was to prove a team capable of surprising the com-

petitive community as they notably beat steel's nemeses in mTw with a stirring comeback after being 10-2 down in the first half. From there they went to beat Norwegian dark horses Space-bar on de_clan1_mill in a thrilling overtime match in which steel had to summon all of his abilities in clutch situations. The eventual 7th placing these performances resulted in had steel established as one of the top North American talents, having won the WCG and now upset a number of big name teams. With 3D looking to revamp their roster he was invited to become a full time member and readily accepted.

While his team-mates in 3D headed off to the WCG to represent the USA steel was heading back with an LnD mix team to represent Canada again as at the time all WCG champions were provided a spot in the next WCG tournament and travel expenses. As largely a mix team and without real practice LnD had little expected of them and they did not make a significant impact in the final rankings, but did surprise a few by overcoming the Swedish representatives. At this event steel also competed in the continent versus continent event and won his second WCG medal, this time a bronze.

Back home with his American colleagues steel played a pivotal role in their stirring victory at CPL Winter 2002. Along the way he produced a stellar individual performance in the upper bracket finals on de_inferno against eventual 2nd place finishers GoL. When 3D captured the CPL title in the finals steel had set himself apart from every other Counter-Strike player by becoming the first Counter-Strike player to win both a WCG gold medal and a CPL championship title.

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When companies stepped forward to sponsor 3D following their win steel also became the only Canadian member of an American sponsored Counter-Strike team, showing the regard to which his own teammates ranked him above all the other talent in the USA. steel's last big placing at a major event came when 3D finished 3rd at CPL Summer 2003. When his career ended in early 2005 steel had captured over $115,000 in team career prize winnings and 2 WCG medals. He now studies to become a photographer and can be found writing articles about Counter-Strike for ESEA.

2001 1st Polybash CPL qualifier $2,500 (LnD)
2001 1st WCG Canada qualifier (LnD)
2001 1st WCG $40,000 (LnD) – Gold medal
2002 1st Dreamcité CPL qualifier $1,000 (LnD)
2002 7th CPL Summer $4,000 (GX)
2002 9th WCG (LnD)
2002 3rd WCG Continent vs. Continent (America) – Bronze medal
2002 1st CPL Winter $30,000 (3D)
2003 2nd KillerLAN $1,500 (3D)
2003 3rd CPL Summer $28,000 (3D)
2003 13th CPL Winter $1,000 (3D)
2004 13th CPL Summer $1,000 (3D)
2004 8th CPL Winter $2,000 (3D)

Total team career prize winnings: over **$115,000**

Q&A

How did you get involved with TAO-CS and what made you want to be a part of its creation?

steel:

 "The idea for TAO-CS was born during a casual conversation Thorin and I had about the learning curve involved in CS and the resources that aspiring players had available to them to shorten this. Bearing in mind I wasn't competitively active in the game at that point, for the most current information on the game we brought Rambo on board to make TAO-CS as complete as possible."

What were you aiming to achieve in creating TAO-CS and how successful do you think you were to those ends?

steel:

"TAO-CS's main goal was to create an exhaustive and comprehensive guide to help up and coming players understand what it means and especially what it takes to reach the top of the Counter-strike competitive circuit."

Who would you recommend TAO-CS for and what will they get out of it?

steel:

"TAO-CS is geared for anyone looking to improve their game that already has a basic knowledge of CS. The wealth of information means that anyone looking to up the ante will learn, from the least experienced competitively to the higher echelons of competitive player."

Duncan "Thorin" Shields

Age: 24

After taking up the virtual pen when the only writers whose work he enjoyed retired Thorin quickly established himself as one of Europe most hard-working and unique esports journalists/writers. Beginning with a Russian site which translated his writings into Russian for a sister site he soon moved on to work with esports legend and one of the aforementioned writers, Izn0, at the Scandinavian subscription service Gamers.nu. Refining his writing style and developing an entertaining, if at times controversial, persona from which to operate from behind Thorin's writing quickly became regularly referred on community websites the world over. During his time at Gamers.nu he travelled to events in Sweden, Norway, France and the USA to cover events in a time period when no other sites could afford to send journalists out to cover such events. His unique audio content, including interviews before and after matches with the world's premiere players was unlike anything which had preceded it in Counter-Strike and would take many years until the era of streaming broadcasting until it was at all replicated by others.

After his time at Gamers.nu ended when his salary no longer matched his living situation Thorin briefly considered departing the esports world before providing pro bono work for American team 3D's website which he would revamp and redesign. In doing so he further attracted the attentions of 3D manager Torbull who

invited him to join the ESEA company and help them build a North American subscription service similar to that he had been intimately involved with at Gamers. nu. The service was launched and went on to be wildly successful amongst the community. After creating features like Ask ESEA (a successor to the popular Ask HeatoN and Ask element features he had innovated for Gamers. nu) and conducting hundreds of interviews and thousands of CS movie reviews (a feature he had invented in 2002) Thorin took a hiatus from esports and ESEA in 2005. This ended in late 2006 when he came back to ESEA, initially to provide one of his specialities, CS movie reviews, but as 2007 came along eventually to become a writer and journalist again. Thorin currently hosts the ESEA features 'Ask ESEA', 'Master Debater' and writes articles for the European version of the site.

Events attended for coverage purposes:

2001 CPL London, UK (Pro-cybernews)
2002 CPL Summer Dallas, USA (Gamers.nu)
2002 CPL Oslo, Norway (Gamers.nu)

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2002 WCG Qualifier Stockholm, Sweden (Gamers.nu)

2002 CPL Winter Dallas, USA (Gamers.nu)

2003 CPL Cannes, France (Gamers.nu)

2003 Clikarena Toulouse, France (Gamers.nu)

2004 CPL Winter Dallas, USA (ESEA)

Q&A

How did you get involved with TAO-CS and what made you want to be a part of its creation?

Thorin:

"The idea of a Counter-Strike guide had always been something present in my mind in the sense that I often think of ways things can be improved or done to the fullest of their potential. When conversation between steel and I had us both agreeing that there were no proper resources out there to get a player from the bottom to the top or intermediate players to the next level or even top players to complete their skill set I knew there was a solution. We brought in Rambo so he could provide up to date information and concepts to ensure TAO-CS was as complete as possible. What made me want to be a part of the creation is that here are two of the best Counter-Strike players to ever pick up a mouse so I knew what I could get from them was going to max out the potential of this project. In my career I haven't taken every opportunity that came along, only those which provided me with full access so the potential of each project could be reached, TAO-CS was no different and it shows in the end product."

What were you aiming to achieve in creating TAO-CS and how successful do you think you were to those ends?

Thorin:

"If we were going to make a Counter-Strike guide then it couldn't be simplistic or a cash-in on steel or Rambo's names, it had to be the most comprehensive guide we could create and take in all aspects of the game, including those players were usually uneasy about giving away to their competitors and future rivals. With both players on board and buying into the philosophy we had set for the project I knew we had an ideal creative unit: steel and Rambo are both masters of different styles of Counter-Strike play which run the gamut and I knew my years of investigative writing and interviewing gave me the skill set to extract everything from these legends of the game and translate it so even the layman could understand and appreciate it. I think this guide far exceeds the requirements for such a project and when people have finished studying it and seeing how their game improves they'll appreciate the kind of effort and creativity that went into making it."

Who would you recommend TAO-CS for and what will they get out of it?

Thorin:

"I'd recommend TAO-CS for anyone who wants to learn more about Counter-Strike and improve their game, which should be everyone. Part of the reason getting to the top competitively isn't easy in Counter-Strike is that many of the concepts and principles governing the play of the best players are hard to decipher, they make them look so effortless and simple. To really understand them you need to be able to get inside those players' heads and then be able to translate what you find back into language and terms you can understand. That's what this guide does and through the different mediums of teaching, from text to video, players are going to find they have the bible of competitive Counter-Strike in front of them and it's just up to them now how much they can and want to learn."

This is a sample of The Art of Counter-Strike.

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Sponsorship

For the player or team intent on climbing the ladder of competitive play knowing how to deal with sponsors or prospective sponsors is a vital part of ensuring one's progress upwards is as quick and painless as possible. This element of Counter-Strike where the business world meets the competitive community of players can produce a number of tricky situations to deal with for those without considerable past experience. Here the basic pitfalls will be outlined along with approaches to sponsorship for different levels of player/team.

Make sure it's real

The majority of CS players do not understand their own value to sponsors and as a result make ridiculous demands or submit to poor offers. It is important to ask a variety of questions while understanding that a promise and an action are two entirely separate things. Many sponsored teams work on a voucher relationship whereby they are promised something in return for a service or reaching a specified performance level. In a number of cases the sponsor's side of such an arrangement does not materialize. Many teams will claim to be sponsored but are in fact being exploited, as is quite common with many mid-tier teams.

A sponsor's main concern is how much exposure you're giving them.

steel outlines the most effective basic approach to attaining sponsorship:

"The best route of sponsorship is, as management, in creating relationships at LANs or events and not over ventrilo or IRC"

Rambo sums the essence up simply:

"Once you take the site just hold your angle and delay, you want to be defensive and waste as much time as possible. This is the defensive route of holding a site."

On the offensive side of holding a site the player may find himself outnumbered and so getting a pick can be useful. The player can catch enemies off-guard by peeking, flash peeking or just playing aggressively. This kind of play puts pressure on the opposition which is always a good thing. On the other hand when the terrorists have the number advantage over the Counter-Terrorists it is best to play defensively and not get picked, forcing them to make a move while burning time off the bomb clock.

Things to keep in mind when holding a site:

- The player should pick a spot he is comfortable in and then say which choke point he is watching.
- Grenades should be used to clog up choke points or flashes to disrupt/delay retakes.
- When outnumbered it can be useful, but also risky, for the player to try and pick off an enemy by playing aggressive and then having done that revert to defensive play.
- Players should use their team-mates to hold a site; if they get in trouble or stuck they can just hide.

Rambo decides to hold his ground despite a convincing fake

3D vs Ouch at the WCG USA 2005 Qualifier / Rambo's POV

- Being concealed is one of the best things to be in Counter-Strike so the player is advised to simply hide and delay if the bomb timer has very nearly run down. This is because a living terrorist is always a threat to defusing counter-terrorists and thus gives you more time.
- Setup cross-fires with team-mates to increase effectiveness of covering choke points.
- Ensure there is always someone watching the flank, typically this responsibility should go to the last player/the one lagging behind.